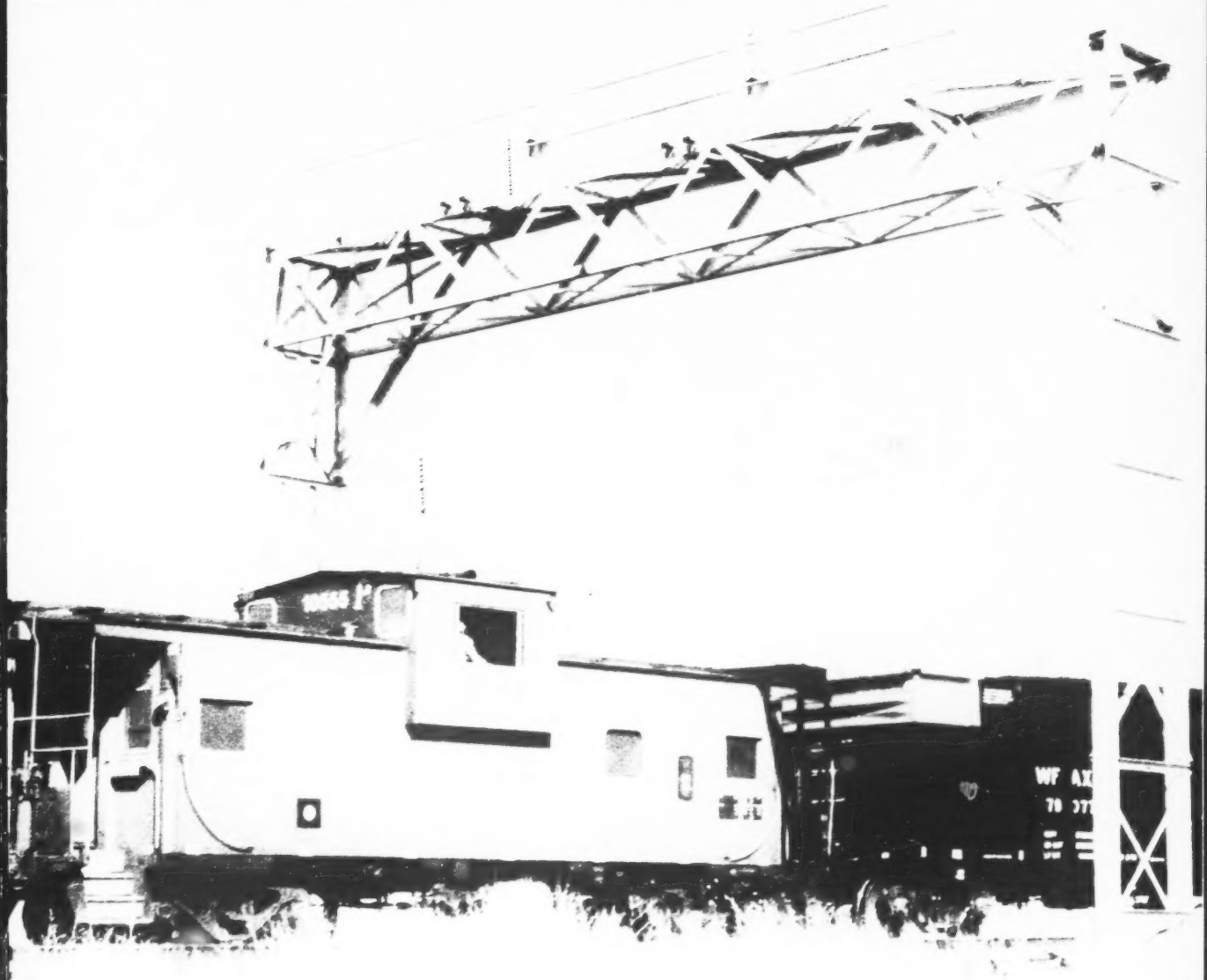
1980 railroader's guide to Washington

February 11, 1980

RAILWAY AGE



The state of the art —and beyond

Train control systems

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Inside

LUTHER S. MILLER

PRODUCTIVITY

There's a lot of breast-beating, particularly in shipper circles, about the railroads' failure to wrest greater productivity from their substantial investments in men and machines. It does seem that on any yardstick of productivity, railroad gains in any given year are often measured in millimeters. But over, say, a period of dozen years, the picture looks considerably brighter—and it is just such a picture that is buried deep in the hundreds of pages of documentation that the railroads recently sent to the ICC along with their request for a new rate increase (p. 4). For the benefit of our readers—particularly our several thousand shipper readers—we have dug it out, and here it is:

Freight revenue ton-miles per:	1967-1978 increase	Annual average increase
Employee	36%	3.3%
Employee-hour	34%	3.1%
Route-mile	32%	2.9%
Active locomotive	6%	.5%
Serviceable freight car	40%	3.6%
Freight car-mile	21%	1.9%
Freight train-mile	18%	1.6%
Freight train-hour	10%	0.9%

For those who measure progress not by how far we've gone, but by how far we still have to go, there is ample reason for breast-beating. For those of us who sometimes look at it the other way, the figures above are mighty encouraging.

"NOT A WORLD WITHOUT PROBLEMS. . . ."

Our cover story in this issue is on train control—the first in a series of 10 articles that will explore, during the coming year, "Railroad technology: The state of the art—and beyond." In this first installment, Senior Editor Gus Welty looks into "a whole new world of minicomputers and microprocessors. . .a world that promises greater efficiency in getting trains over the road with minimum delay, with all this implies meeting hot schedules, conserving fuel, and controlling crew costs. But is is not a world without problems." The problems as well as the promises are thoroughly aired in the article beginning on p. 14.

Next in the series will be John Armstrong's report on motive power, scheduled for publication April 14. Other articles will cover track machines, yards, cars, loss and damage prevention, intermodal equipment, communications, trucks and running gear, and detection equipment. In researching each of these, we are seeking out the ideas of both railroad people and suppliers. We will welcome our readers' suggestions.

WASHINGTON: WHO? WHERE? HOW?

You want information on the railroad provisions of a bill that is about to come out of the Senate Finance Committee. Whom do you call? Try either William Morris or Jack Curtis; they handle rail issues for that committee and can be reached at 202/224-4515.

That is just one of many hundreds of entries that you'll find in our revised Railroader's Guide to Washington, which is cosponsored (as have been the two previous guides) by Thrall Car. It begins on p. 25.

RAILWAY AGE

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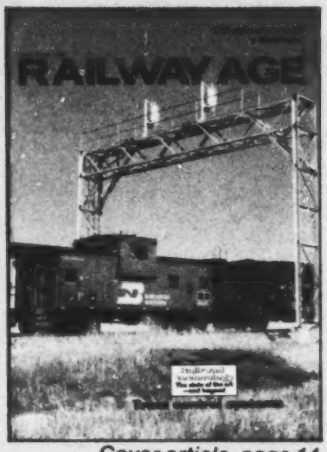
FEATURES



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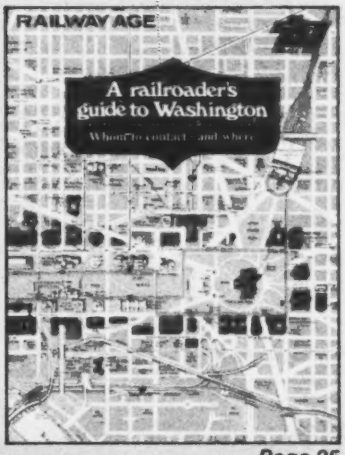

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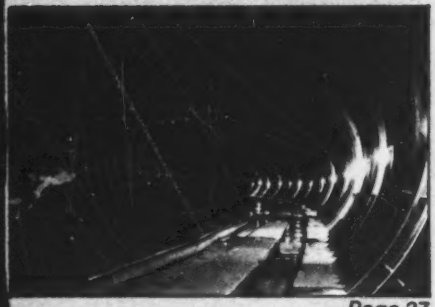

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14 Railroad technology: Train control systems
In the first of a series of 10 articles exploring "Railroad technology: The state of the art—and beyond," Senior Editor Gus Welty examines developments using minicomputers and microprocessors that promise to step up train-handling efficiency, with concommitant savings in time, fuel, and crew costs.

20 SCL's goal: Two locomotives for the price of one
As the price of new locomotives escalated, Seaboard Coast Line decided to try "remanufacturing" its own. A year and a half later, SCL's Tampa shop is turning out a new "GP-15" every week.

25 1980 Railroader's guide to Washington
Sometimes writing your congressman just doesn't cut it, and the nation's capital can be a tough place to find your way around. If you pull out and save RA's 1980 guide, you can let your fingers do the walking.

37 Baltimore transit: Half way there
America's next new heavy rail rapid transit system should be ready for revenue passengers by the end of 1982, with equipment tests to begin in mid-1981. Meanwhile, a six-mile extension is being designed, with an eye to a truly regional transit system for the Baltimore area.

46 Chicago RTA: Keeping up with the commuter influx
Since Chicago's Regional Transportational Authority was formed in 1974, it has been working hard to catch up on deferred maintenance. With demand for its rail services rising fast, there's going to be a lot more building ahead.

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COVER: A coal train passes under a signal bridge west of Alliance, Neb., on Burlington Northern's new line.

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Market

CARLOADINGS

Loadings of revenue freight in the week ended Jan. 26 totaled 450,285 cars, according to the Association of American Railroads. This was an increase of 45,647 cars, or 11.3%, compared with the corresponding week last year. Ton-miles generated by carloadings in the week ended Jan. 26 are estimated at 17.4 billion, an increase of 15.4% above the corresponding week of 1979.

REVENUE FREIGHT CARLOADINGS

Commodity	Jan. 26 week	Jan. 19 week	Jan. 12 week
Grain	32,803	30,138	29,550
Farm products	4,669	4,834	4,834
Metallic ores	23,664	22,243	26,805
Coal	103,796	102,344	103,418
Crushed stone, gravel & sand	12,903	13,445	13,038
Nonmetallic minerals	14,151	14,447	14,284
Grain mill products	19,325	19,178	19,238
Food and kindred products	19,721	19,197	18,632
Primary forest products	21,052	20,798	20,502
Lumber & wood products (except furniture)	11,304	10,687	9,618
Pulp, paper & allied products	22,138	22,232	20,709
Chemicals & allied products	28,941	29,279	29,374
Petroleum products	6,809	7,182	6,587
Stone, clay & glass products	16,210	16,095	15,845
Coke	6,793	6,444	6,041
Metals & products	18,336	18,514	16,796
Motor vehicles & equipment	18,230	17,295	16,851
Waste & scrap materials	13,888	14,378	13,783
Forwarder & shipping assn. traffic	11,538	11,376	10,343
All other carloads	43,746	44,269	41,753
LCL traffic	268	235	250
Total cars loaded	**450,285**	**444,610**	**438,251**
Cumulative total, 4 weeks	**1,700,844**		**1,563,841**
Estimated revenue ton-miles (billions) 4 weeks	**65.7**		**58.7**

PIGGYBACK LOADINGS

U.S. piggyback loadings for the week ended Jan. 19 totaled 34,309 cars (19.9% above the corresponding 1979 week) and 62,438 trailers or containers (up 24.2% from 1979). Cumulative volume for the first 3 weeks of 1980 is 89,859 cars (up 6.4% from 1979) and 162,578 trailers or containers (up 11.3% from 1979).

CANADIAN CARLOADINGS

Canadian railway revenue freight loaded in the seven-day period ended Jan. 7, 1980, totaled 3.5 million tons (up 8.2% from 1979). Cars loaded totaled 49,649 (up 3.0% from 1979). Freight loaded in the ten days ending Dec. 31, 1979, totaled 4.7 million tons (up 3.3% from 1978) and cars loaded totaled 62,857 (down 3.5% from 1978). Volume for 1979 was 261.6 million tons (up 8.5% from1978). Cars loaded in 1979 totaled 3,889,148 (up 4.1% from 1978).

● *Amtrak*.—Directors approved construction of a $6-million commissary and warehouse at the Chicago 12th Street yards. The existing commissary is located at 21st Street; warehousing is now carried out at both the 12th and 21st Street yards. The new facility is part of a $40.6-million modernization program of Amtrak's 12th and 16th Street yards. In phase one of the program, a locomotive-servicing facility and five car-servicing tracks were constructed. The second phase saw the construction of two additional car-servicing tracks, a three-track enginehouse and a three-track car shop. The commissary/warehouse project is part of the third phase, which will also see installation of wheel-truing facilities, an equipment washer, and an m/w facility. In the fourth and fifth phases, more car-servicing tracks will be added along with train inspection pits and a car storage yard.

● *New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority*.—Authorized expenditure of $2.25 million for acquisition and rehabilitation of a 14.3-acre Conrail yard in Brooklyn adjacent to the New York City Transit Authority's Linden shop, where track panels are prefabricated. MTA Chairman Richard Ravitch says this will permit materials used in production of the track panels to be shipped to Linden by rail instead of by truck, thus saving over $1 million a year in trucking and handling costs.

● *Norfolk & Western*.—1980 capital program, totaling a record $162.9 million, includes $102.4 million for the following new equipment: 25 six-axle, 3,000-hp diesel-electric units; 228 fully enclosed trilevel auto racks and 23 enclosed bilevel racks; 500 100-ton covered hoppers, to be built at Roanoke shops (in addition to 500 grain covered hoppers already under construction); 500 100-ton gondolas, to be built at Roanoke shops; 300 2,980-cubic-foot-capacity, 100-ton covered hoppers for hauling cement and other dense materials (NW's board also authorized acquisition of 500 similar cars for 1981 delivery); and 250 45-foot piggyback trailers. NW's 1980 roadway capital program, budgeted at $60.5 million, calls for installation of 150 track miles of new cwr and 161 miles of "fit" welded rail; installation of new defective-equipment detectors at several locations; a new remote-controlled switching system at Portsmouth, Ohio; a new computer to control the hump yard switching operation at Bellevue; a new freight car truck bolster reclamation shop at Roanoke; and new roadway maintenance equipment valued at $3.5 million.

● *Seaboard Coast Line*.—Awarded a contract to McDowell-Wellman for design and detailed engineering plans for expansion of SCL's phosphate ship-loading terminal at Tampa, Fla. Completion of the project will increase the terminal's throughput capacity to 8.5 million tons annually.